



Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Parliament of Queensland

Media Statement

Monday, 24 May 2010

Parliament's Speaker meets with descendant of first Speaker

The current speaker of the Queensland Parliament Mr John Mickel has met with a descendant of the Parliament's first Speaker.

Mr Mickel spoke with Mr Gilbert Oakes of Warwick at an Open Day at Parliament House last Saturday – the 150th anniversary of the first sitting of the Queensland Parliament on 22 May 1860.

Mr Mickel said he was especially pleased that Mr Oakes was able to be present for the launch of the Speakers' Corner project in the George Street forecourt of Parliament House.

"This location is one where people traditionally have gathered or come to voice protest.

"Freedom of speech is one of basic freedoms in a democracy, and the Parliament is a strong symbol of democracy in Queensland.

"As a legacy project to mark the Parliament's 150th year, we are formally designating a space outside the front of Parliament House as Speakers' Corner.

"The plaque that the Governor, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley, and I unveiled includes a quote from Mr Oakes' great great grandfather, the first Speaker – Mr Gilbert Elliott.

"The quotation from the first sitting day was one of Speaker Elliott urging new Members of the Legislative Assembly to show tolerance and self-control, and resist taking offence at what might be said to them.

"... I would urge on honourable members mutual forbearance and self-control, and the necessity of not taking exception to words and expressions which might bear a very different interpretation to that which at the time they might be disposed to attach to them."

Mr Mickel introduced Mr Oakes to the Governor during a morning tea on the Speaker's Green at Parliament House. More than 2000 people attended the open day at Parliament House.

"It was tremendous that Mr Oakes could be present," Mr Mickel said. "It provided a direct link back to that first day when the Parliament sat in 1860 and Gilbert Elliott as Speaker was in charge of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly.

"I am the 34th person to hold the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and to meet up with a direct descendant of the first Speaker on the occasion of the Parliament's 150th anniversary was certainly one of the highlights of the day," Mr Mickel said.

For further information: Joe Begley 3406 7170




Celebrating 150 years of Parliament in Queensland
Speakers' Corner
Dedicated by the Honourable John Macken, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland
22 May 2010
I would like to associate my corner of our country and our people with the members of our state assembly in their own right, with the 150th anniversary of our nation's birth. It is a long but a just and noble journey to go.
The Honourable GIBBY HUGHES, MP, MHA
First Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland
First Speaker of the Lower Parliament on 22 May 1860


